

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
JANUARY 8, 1998**

Projects Reviewed

WSCTC Expansion Project

Convened: 8:00 AM

Adjourned: 10:00 AM

Commissioners Present

Barbara Swift, Chair

Moe Batra

Carolyn Darwish

Gail Dubrow

Robert Foley

Gerald Hansmire

Rick Sundberg

Staff Present

Marcia Wagoner

Peter Aylsworth

Rebecca Walls

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010898.1      Project: **WSCTC Expansion Project**  
                  Phase: Design Development  
          Presenters: Chuck Hartung, WSCTC  
                          Chris Eseman, LMN Architects  
                          George Loschky, LMN Architects  
                          Gerry Gerron, G2 Architecture  
                          Carolyn Law, consultant  
          Attendees: Rick S. Bender, WSCTC/Boardmember  
                          Ron Bolstad, LMN Architects  
                          Ted Caloger, G2 Architecture  
                          John Christison, WSCTC  
                          Ryan Durkan, Hillis, Clark  
                          Jim Ellis, WSCTC/Boardmember  
                          Bill Foulkes, WSCTC  
                          Vic Hawley, WSCTC  
                          Richard C. Hedreen, R.C. Hedreen Company  
                          J. Heron, R.C. Hedreen Company  
                          Dan Johnson, WSCTC  
                          Steve Johnston  
                          Peter Krech, Callison Architecture  
                          Matt Lampe, Executive Services Department  
                          Phyllis Lamphere, WSCTC/Boardmember  
                          Vince Lyons, Department of Construction & Land-Use  
                          Ethan Melone, Executive Services  
                          James L. Wilson, WSCTC/Past Boardmember  
                          Ron Yorita, WSCTC

On December 1, 1997 the Design Commission stated three primary expectations to be met prior to recommending Conceptual Approval of the street and alley vacations requested by the Washington State Convention and Trade Center. The Commission's primary goal is placemaking, the creation of a vital and publicly accessible place in the city. The following three design elements were asked to be addressed by the middle of January 1998:

- A. Document the *interconnections* - interior and exterior;
  - 1. to existing spaces,
  - 2. to new spaces,
  - 3. to entryways.
- B. Redefine the design to enhance *animation* or vitality of the project and its context;
  - 1. through refining the programming and design uses and events of the interior and exterior space in the short and long term,
  - 2. animate the streetscape, blank walls and spaces.
- C. Present a comprehensive program for the inclusion of *art*;
  - 1. develop a program that meets the above requirements and includes a concept, process, and timeline,
  - 2. integrate the above into the interconnections of spaces and animation of the project.

These criteria were addressed by the design team in the following manner:

### ***Interconnections***

- presented diagrams of the urban context and the opportunities for the Convention Center to be a key focal point in its neighborhood;
- presented diagrams of the public spaces in the existing Convention Center and the development of a network of public open spaces, and lingering opportunities (discussed further in the animation section);
- developed the Ninth Avenue and Pike intersection as a visual gateway from Capitol Hill by extending the landscaped cornice line of the Convention Center over to the Ninth Avenue facade linking the two buildings and screening the truck loading area from the street. The design also calls for a glazed vertical element at the corner, establishing a gateway, or portal, to the Pike Street corridor.

### ***Animation***

The design team concentrated on creating activity areas and animation with retail frontage realizing that retail spaces require continuity. Ground floor retail was developed in the following ways.

- retail space was extended about half way up Ninth Avenue;
- the cornice line was lowered to create a two story frontage with a more human scale;
- depth was added to the facades through primary and secondary elements and fenestration;
- created three retail bays on the north side of Pike Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, moving the Convention Center exit stairs elsewhere;
- the Eighth Avenue tunnel's barrel vaulted ceiling was lowered to create a single story retail facade and a more human scale pedestrian zone.

The design team developed spaces for lingering as follows:

- 1st Floor- along the street edge, along the building edge, in the new lobby, and in the existing promenade,
- 2nd Floor- spaces around new lobby atrium with major art piece, and in existing promenade,
- 3rd Floor- activities would be based on the nature of the show,
- 4th Floor- in existing gallery space and access to the park through the south entrances.

The design team created the following opportunities for public seating:

- at the street edge even during peak hours of the day,
- in the new lobby during moderate use hours of the day,
- increased use and greater possibilities for uses in the new lobby space during slow hours of the day.

### ***Art***

The art plan concept is 'The Art of Communication in the People's Place'. The goal is to integrate artwork effectively into the pedestrian zone that makes visible the multi-faceted communication activities that take place in the Convention Center.

A major art piece has been commissioned for the lobby. It will be a set of nine foot, hanging torpedo-like objects covered with glass tile mosaic. The sculpture will be free to move and sparkle creating a dynamic feature that also serves to interconnect the lobby vertically.

The possible art sites are as follows:

The ground plane - the use of art on the ground plane will attempt to create a cohesive network throughout the expansion project in conjunction with the interior spaces of the Convention Center. The design team has presented a very general conceptual idea for the intersections and sidewalks of the entire site, possibly extending into the lobby spaces. The concept of rings radiating from the three intersections on Pike Street like ripples on water is a visual metaphor for the idea of levels of communication. It offers a framework and set of possibilities for artists to develop the concept through variations of image, symbol, language, scale, shape, color, and materials.

Exit doors - the large numbers of exit door at street level that the Convention Center requires have been viewed as opportunities for artwork to be developed.

Bollards - an important safety feature for pedestrians, these also become opportunities for artwork. They occur in clusters in several specific areas which allows them to be treated conceptually.

Metal armatures for lighting of 8th Avenue - a metal armature spans across the tunnel space holding up trolley wires, up and down lighting, and decorative lighting becomes an important artistic opportunity.

These three areas are intertwined together to reinforce the idea of placemaking. Through art, animation, and interconnection this project can create a wonderful public place for both specific events and for lingering.

### **Questions and Comments:**

**Batra:** Has there been discussion about placing art on the underneath side of the truck bridge? There seems to be an opportunity there.

**Law:** Art opportunities are all open at this point.

**Hartung:** The original design focused the art opportunities down at the pedestrian level.

**Law:** I understood that the truck bridge and the galleria were complete in their design. There is often a tendency to put art everywhere. I think that consolidating the art at ground level makes the most sense.

**Darwish:** What are the opportunities for public events programming in the galleria space that would encourage people to use the space?

**Christison:** The Convention Center currently has a variety of events and performances that result in almost constant public activity.

**Hinshaw:** The previously discussed historic theme was left behind to allow for more artist involvement.

**Law:** The art potential will greatly add to the public entrances. From the facade down to the ground plane it becomes a dynamic place, drawing people in. There will also be the hanging sculpture in the corner lobby.

**Dubrow:** I have some reservations about using only Artist-Made-Building-Parts as the basis for the art program. I am concerned about the elements that might need a larger canvas. Some parts of the art program may need an invitational or commissioned approach. There must be a bridge between the art and the architecture in order to have both the parts and the whole.

- Foley:** Is it possible for performing arts to be expanded into the streetscape? Could this be part of the arts program?
- Christison:** The Convention Center would like that kind of flexibility. The galleria space offers more opportunities for events and performances.
- Hansmire:** This is a very impressive design with a lot of improvements. It feels very animated and supplies a palette of thing for the arts program. I see a lot of real positive changes.
- Foley:** I am reminded of previous comments about the bones of the project. I think that the bones are now in place. It is very impressive.
- Swift:** I like what happens on the facades and the attempt to create more depth in the facades while scaling them down to a human level. I have some reservations about only using the Artist-Made-Building-Parts because it is based on what artists have made in the past. I urge you to think about the artists in terms of their abilities as creative thinkers and problem solvers.
- Law:** I take a similar stance. There is a new Artist-Made-Building-Parts roster that has been greatly expanded. We have talked about being able to augment that roster as needed. We are trying to give the artists reasonable parameters. Artists are the critical piece in this project. They will be asked to do a big job in a short time, and will therefore have to jump in running.
- Dubrow:** The artists' role has greatly expanded, how has the arts budget changed in response to these increases?
- Lamphere:** It became clear to us early on that the project needed a substantial piece in the main lobby. The sculpture will help to connect the floors vertically into a unified space. This piece has been commissioned and selected with separate funding.
- Law:** Some budget issues still have to be developed, but we are trying to bring realistic changes to the budget. There is a lot of weight hanging on the artists' shoulders. I advocate reasonable pay for artwork.
- Hartung:** We began with a \$300,000 state budget, primarily for the main sculpture piece. We have increased the budget by a few hundred thousand dollars for artist parts. Some enhancements in the architecture have taken from the art budget, however.

**Commission Discussion:**

- Swift:** The revised design seems to have dealt with the issues outlined in the December 1, 1997 action. There are a couple of areas that need more development, but should not hinder approval at this level:
- further development of the arts program
  - further identification of lingering opportunities and the design elements that will support lingering.
- Dubrow:** I share that opinion. I would like to see the lingering infrastructure presented in better detail. The exterior has been greatly animated through scaling elements. I question how well artists will be able to do all that we ask them to do with a limited budget. The design effort has been amazingly successful.
- Darwish:** I also think the project has developed impressively.
- Sundberg:** This has been an extraordinary effort. I am remarkably pleased with the redesign. I also share the detail concerns Barb mentioned about the art and furnishings.
- Hansmire:** I like the bigger look at the art and how it relates to the big picture within the project. I can see it being the kind of art that grows on you, which you don't need to fully understand immediately.
- Batra:** You all have made astonishing progress. The public art has really become part of the buildings.
- Foley:** This design goes beyond animation to engagement, population, and activity in these spaces. I congratulate the design teams, the Convention Center, the Hedreen Company, and everyone else involved on a wonderful project.

**Lamphere:** We would like to thank the Commission for its great assistance in this project.

**Action:** The Commission recommends approval of the project as presented. The Commission enthusiastically supports the vigorous effort to develop a design that will be an asset to the city. The design teams have dealt with the issues stated in the action from the December 1 meeting. The commission appreciates the incredible efforts of the design teams in bringing this project to such a level of design excellence. The Commission is interested in the development and further review of the following areas:

- full development of the arts program, with attention to the arts budget;
- expand its programmed events to include the street environment;
- further development of opportunities for the public to linger and the inclusion of design elements that support public access and use.

These issues do not hinder the Commission's enthusiastic approval of the project as presented, but are areas for development and further review as the project continues.